Then, I would request to the hon. Member to wait for a few days when the Plan would be circulated to all.

*43. [The questioners (Shri Nandi Yelliah and Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy) were absent. For answer *vide* pages 49-50 *infra*].

श्री सभापति: टी॰ सुब्बारामी रेड्डी।

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, he informed that he is not coming.

श्री सभापति: नहीं हैं, नहीं है तो अच्छी बात है।

* 44. [The questioners Shri Anil Sharma was absent for answer *vide* pages 50-51 *infra*].

Disinvestment of National Fertilizers Limited

*45. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of DISINVESTMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that overall performance of the National Fertilizers Limited (NFL) is very impressive and its net profit after tax deduction during the last fiscal year has been registered at Rs. 40.61 crores against Rs. 27.31 crores in 2000-2001;

(b) if so, Government's response thereto alongwith the reasons for the decision to divest 51 per cent of its equity;

(c) whether Government have any plan to review the decision of disinvestment of NFL; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a, (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Disinvestment in Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) is being undertaken as per the declared policy of the Government to bring down its equity in non-strategic CPSUs to 26% or below in generality of cases. The non-strategic CPSUs are those, which are not in the areas of arms & ammunitions and allied items of defence equipment, defence aircrafts and warships, atomic energy (except in the areas related to the generation of nucl.ar power and applications of radiations and radio-

isotopes to agriculture, medicine and non-strategic industries) and railway transport. This policy is applicable to profit-making as well as loss-making CPSUs. In accordance with the recommendations of the Disinvestment Commission, the Government has decided to disinvest its equity in National Fertilisers Limited as it operates in the non-strategic sector.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of reply to (c) above.

SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Sir, I would like to know whether the Government would have any control on prices of fertilizers after privatisation of the public sector enterprises. Then, what are the steps the Government intends to adopt for the supply of fertilizers to farmers in the form of resale by newly-established private companies.

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: Sir, the question relates to the privatisation of National Fertilizers Limited only and not to the Fertilizer Price Policy in general. Sir, with your permission, I will just inform the House that the Fertilizer Pricing Policy has been finalised under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission and has been announced widely and the Government will continue to fix those prices according to a pattern which has been disclosed. If the Members want details, they extend to almost 20 pages and I will send it to them. In fact, the National Fertilizers Corporation has been paid a subsidy arrears of about Rs. 487 crores in this regard. And we are very happy in this regard.

SHRI C.O. POULOSE: The valuation of the National Fertilizers Corporation Limited is being done by the Ministry of Disinvestment. Even the Government considers that the valuation carried out reflects the actual asset valuation of the establishment, including its goodwill. Taking into consideration the controversies regarding the valuation of certain public sector enterprises in the recent past, what precautionary steps are being taken by the Government to avoid such incidents?

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: Sir, the valuation will be done as it is done in all cases and certainly not by the Ministry of Disinvestment, but by the experts and it will be considered by the inter-Ministerial group and the reserve prices will be set accordingly. Sir, here the real question is not of goodwill but in this case, the NFL has five plants, out of which three are running in serious losses and only two plants in Vijaypur are working well.

In any case, the real problem which is going to arise, is not of goodwill but of extensive land which these plants have. On that, we will be very careful. We already have the experience of sequestering the land as in the case of the BSNL.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, the basic question here is that the National Fertilizers Limited has already earned a profit of Rs. 40 crores against Rs. 27.31 crores. So, why this disinvestment? Sir, it has been told that because it is non-strategic, it is being disinvested. There is one thing I want to clarify when Mr. Shourie is talking about three plants not running well and two plants running well. It has nothing to do with the plants. It is because of the feed stock. Naptha-based Fertilizers units, as the Fertilizer Minister has told, time and again, whether it is in private or public sector, are not running in profit. Most of the Naptha-based plants are not running well. So the question of ownership does not arise. The gas-based plants are running efficiently, whether they are in the public sector or private sector. You say that though it is running in profit, this has to be disinvested only to bring a change in ownership. I understand that KRIBHCO and IFFCO, where the Government has got 80 per cent equity, are also being allowed to bid for this National Fertilizers Limited. The Government has got 80 per cent equity in that too. So, what exactly are we achieving by this? The Government is having 80 per cent equity in the KRIBHCO and the IFFCO and 100 per cent in the NFL. If the KRIBHCO and the IFFCO take it over, your ownership business will also not change. So, what purpose is being served through all these transactions and dilly-dallying?

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: Sir, the disinvestment of National Fertilizers is going on since 1996 when the then Government referred it to the Disinvestment Commission. In 1998, the Disinvestment Commission said that it should be disinvested. इस स्पीड पर ब्रीज चल रही है। But, Sir, On this specific point of what purpose is being served by allowing those two cooperatives in which the Government has 80 per cent equity to bid, I was questioned, day-before-yesterday in the debate, "Why are you not allowing ONGC and other public sector enterprises?" So, in this case, the general policy that has been adopted by the Government is that PSUs and those cooperatives in which the Government has equity of 51 per cent or more, shall not in the generality of cases of allowed to bid for other PSUs. But in cases where the administrative Ministry feels that an

exception should be made, it will have to come with the specific case to the CCB. Mr. Dhindsa and others came with these proposals and the Cabinet Committee accepted their proposals. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE : No, Sir. The Ministry of Petroleum also asked for... (*Interruptions*) at that time, they had not been allowed. (*Interruptions*) Why is there this inconsistency? (*Interruptions*) They have one thing for one Ministry and the other for the other Ministry. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: The reasons are gone into in great details. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: They had specifically said that they were interested in bidding for the HPCL. They were told that they were not allowed. That is theory number one. The theory number two, is, in case the Fertiliser Ministry ...(*Interruptions*) What is this theory? What are these two theories? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI JIBON ROY: Sir, ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do not disturb, please.

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: Sir, several things are considered. That is why an exception is made only in particular cases. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: What is the exception? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: I can give you a detailed answer... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: What is the specific reason for ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: I will mention the specific reason, if this is the concern. In this case, an apprehension was expressed that in the plants at Nangal, Panipat and Bhatinda, all of which are located in Punjab, which are running, as Mr. Dipankar Mukherjee said, on very old technology, supplied by Snam Progetti and others, the old technology is leading to great losses and therefore, an apprehension was expressed by the Government of Punjab and by our Ministry here that those plants should not get closed after disinvestment. The one safeguard was that if the Government-owned cooperatives, in which the Government has large equity,

succeeded in this, they would certainly keep those plants going. This was the specific reasons in this case.

श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक: सभापति महोदय, माननीय मंत्री जी ने अपने उत्तर में सरकारी उपक्रमों के संबंध में कुछ गैर-महत्वपूर्ण और महत्वपूर्ण विभागों का विवरण दिया है, तो मैं आपके माध्यम से जानना चाहता हूं कि यह परिभाषा या यह जो इन्होंने महत्वपूर्ण और गैर-महत्वपूर्ण का विभेद किया है, वह किस आधार पर किया गया है और मेरे प्रश्न का दूसरा भाग यह है कि सरकार की जो घोषित नीति थी, वह यही थी कि जो ऐसे उपक्रम हैं जिनमें कि लाभ नहीं हो रहा है, उनको हम अपनी जिम्मेदारी से मुक्त करेंगे, लेकिन अब माननीय मंत्री जी का कहना यह है कि चाहे वे लाभ अर्जित करने वाले हों या अलाभकारी हों, हम सब को बेचेंगे, तो मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि नीति में यह बदलाव कब से हुआ और दूसरे, महत्वपूर्ण और गैर-महत्वपूर्ण विभागों या जिन उपक्रमों को माननीय मंत्री जी ने गिनाया है, उसका आधार क्या है?

श्री अरुण शौरी: सभापति महोदय, बजट स्पीच में जहां तक मेरा ख्याल है 1999 में श्री यशवंत सिन्हा जी ने इसकी परिभाषा दी थी–स्ट्रेटेजिक और नॉन स्ट्रेटेजिक–की ओर उसके कारण दिए गए थे तथा कितनी बार वे एक्सप्लेन भी किए गए हैं और कल ही मैंने इस चीज़ पर फिर से अपनी एक्सप्लेनेशन दी है इन द केस ऑफ् आयल सैक्टर, जब आप यहां पर थे। अब तीसरी चीज़ यह है कि जहां तक मुझे ज्ञान है, कभी भी गवर्नमेंट ने यह नहीं कहा कि हम प्रॉफिट मेकिंग कंपनीज़ को डिसइन्वेस्ट नहीं करेंगे, सिर्फ लॉस मेकिंग्ज़ को ही करेंगे। इन फैक्ट, गवर्नमेंट की हमेशा यह पालिसी रही है कि यह डिस्टिक्शन न तो राज्यों में और न सैंटर में दिया जा रहा है।

Transport corridor to Afghanistan through Iran

*46. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO:††
SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state what has been the action taken to develop a transport corridor from India to Afghanistan and Central Asia through Iran in view of Pakistan denying facilities for overland trade between India and Afghanistan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): A statement is placed on the table of the house.

Statement

As part of its global effort, government has taken concerte action to put in place mechanisms to facilitate increased trade *inter alia* with Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asian countries.

In a meeting held on 4-5 January, 2003 in Tehran, India, Iran and

††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri K. Kalavenkata Rao.